

**PROVIDENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING: May 28, 2009**

**PHA Conference Room 100 Broad Street Providence, RI 02903**

**CALL TO ORDER**

**Chairman Waldman called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.**

**ROLL CALL**

**The Executive Director called the roll:**

**Present Absent**

**Paul F. Waldman**

**Dolores Cascella**

**Jaime Castillo**

**Dorothy Waters**

**JT. Taylor**

**Robert Clarkin**

**Nicholas Narducci**

**Hilary Silver (Excused)**

**Raymond Murphy (Excused)**

**Barbara Fields (Excused)**

**John Igliazzi**

**Seven members were present, constituting a quorum.**

## **RESIDENTS' COMMENTS**

**There were no Resident comments.**

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES (April 23, 2009)**

**Chairman Waldman called for approval of the April 23rd meeting minutes. Commissioner Cascella moved approval of the minutes. Commissioner Castillo seconded the motion. A vote was taken. There being no opposition, Chairman Waldman declared the minutes approved.**

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

**Chairman Waldman apologized for being late for the meeting due to his court case being called late.**

## **Board Policies Update**

**Chairman Waldman stated that the copies of the current board policies will be distributed, along with the potential changes, to be discussed at the next meeting. Commissioners should read and study the policies before the meeting.**

## **By-Laws Update**

**Chairman Waldman also stated that although the work has been done on updating the board bylaws, they can not be voted on tonight because this vote requires 2/3 of the board members to be present, and this meeting does not meet that requirement. He suggested that**

**the resolution be tabled until next month's meeting.**

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Asset Management/Capital Improvements Committee**

**The report was presented to be entered into the record. [See the attached report.]**

### **Budget, Finance & Audit Committee**

**Commissioner Clarkin presented the report to be entered into the record. [See the attached report.]**

### **Resident Services Committee**

**There was no report.**

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### **Monthly Management Report Highlights**

**The Executive Director stated that the Monthly Management Report is included in each Commissioner's packet. The financials year-to-date are very good. We are anticipating a \$2 million surplus for the end of the fiscal year, which is June 30th. This is a large improvement over last year, but not where we want our reserve level to be.**

**The 2010 budget has been passed, and we were anticipating receiving 100% of the operating subsidy. Unfortunately, it appears that we will receive somewhere in the range of 87% to 89%. HUD Secretary**

**Donovan, in his budget message, stated that he believes the budget will, in fact, cover 100% of housing authority operating subsidies because: (1) there are fewer public housing units due to demolition for Hope VI and the conversion of some units to Section 8 vouchers; (2) because of energy saving; and, (3) because tenant rents have gone up. The industry trade organizations, who are usually very accurate, do not believe this is the case. Tenant rents have in fact gone down, and the savings from having fewer public housing units and less energy costs will not be enough to cover 100% of operating expenses. The PHA will be hit harder by lower rents because the State of Rhode Island budget calls for eliminating 332 of our residents from the FIP program, which will lower or completely eliminate their rent. Executive Director O'Rourke is meeting with Peter Marino, Fiscal Advisor for the General Assembly Senate Finance Committee to discuss this issue. However Monique Hazard, Manager of the Manton Heights development, theorizes that tenants losing their FIP will now get reimbursed for 100% of their child care fees, which would offset the other loss of income. We will have to wait and see what the overall effects of these changes will be.**

**The E.D has directed the Finance Department to prepare the budget at 85% to 86% of total operating subsidy, and will present it to the board next month.**

**The Section 8 account is still showing a healthy reserve.**

**The Executive Director stated that for the first time in his years at the PHA we have only one unit offline in turnaround status. This is due to use of some of the stimulus money to hire prisoners from the ACI, and also graduates of the Sherwin Williams Resident Painter Program.**

### **Union Negotiations**

**The Executive Director stated that the PHA has started contract negotiations with the four unions, who are aware of the current financial issues and are not seeking major changes this year. The E.D. and Human Resources Manager are seeking methods to reduce expenditures such as health care through increasing deductions, or health savings plans, rather than additional co-pays.**

### **Summer Youth Workers**

**The PHA has been notified by Providence/Cranston Workforce Solutions that we will have 30 youth workers for the summer for 25 hours per week. Twelve will work in the community centers as Junior Counselors, and 18 will work on the grounds with Facilities Management.**

### **NAHRO Awards**

**The Executive Director announced that we have been notified by NAHRO (National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials) that we have are receiving all three of the awards we have applied for this year. We are receiving awards of merit for our**

**collaboration with:**

- **the Boys & Girls Club**
- **our collaboration with the Providence After School Alliance**
- **Energy Conservation and Rebate Program.**

### **Attention to Items in Board Packet**

**Each month one or more articles related to public housing will be included in each Commissioner's packet in order to provide Commissioners with information on housing issues. This month's packet includes the following:**

- **An article from Governing Magazine about the growing use of police cameras to reduce crime.**
- **A New York Times article about the lack of investors for the development of low income housing.**
- **An article from Multi-Housing News about the possibility that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac will reduce their financing for multifamily housing.**
- **A New York Times article about the NYC Housing Authority's new pet policy.**

### **Stimulus Bill Status Report**

**The Executive Director distributed a report on the projects that are in progress and stated that they are moving along quickly. The contract for \$3.2 million in site improvements for the larger developments will be awarded next week. Work on porches and painting at the scattered sites is already in progress. Thyssen/Krupp has completed**

the elevator specifications for all five highrises and the project has gone out to bid for new elevator systems only. The elevator carriages do not need to be replaced at this time. The pre-bid conference for upgrades to the fire alarm system at Kilmartin was today. The design contract for conversion of units to handicapped - to meet our 5% goal - has been awarded to Fiebelman/Lamborghini. The telephone panels in the foyers of all of the highrises are being upgraded. The new security cameras have already been completed at Chad Brown and Admiral Terrace. Bids were opened last week for the security camera upgrades at Manton Heights, Hartford Park, and Coddington Court; installation will begin in the next week or two. Brewster Thornton Group Architects have been hired for the engineering on exterior renovations at Dominica Manor and for designing replacement panels for the balconies. The cyclical painting, for units that have been occupied by the same tenant for a long period of time, has also begun. Forty-two units have been completed. [See the attached report.]

Next week the PHA will be applying for an additional \$5.0 to \$6.0 million of competitive stimulus funds under two categories. The first category is for public elderly and disabled housing, to accelerate the accessibility program and convert a number of units to handicapped. The second category is for "green" and energy conservation initiatives. We are planning new windows for Dominica Manor, purchasing more energy star appliances, and other energy saving projects to compliment those that have already been put in place with

**the Energy Performance Contract. A full report will be presented at the next board meeting.**

### **Energy Performance Contract Status Report**

**The Executive Director stated that the Energy Performance Contract with Ameresco is 70% complete and should be finished by September. We have encountered a few anticipated glitches, but for a project this size, it's understandable.**

### **Providence Community Action Program (ProCap)**

**The Executive Director stated that because of changes in the regulations and additional stimulus funds, ProCap can now spend more than double the amount they spent in the past per unit, and is installing all new windows in some of the oldest scattered sites, adding more insulation, and possibly installing new boilers in some of our units.**

### **Prisoner Reentry Program**

**The Executive Director explained that the Prisoner Reentry Program involves a number of groups in the city who have partnered to decrease the recidivism rate of prisoners released from the ACI, and plan to work closely with the PHA staff. Many of these prisoners live in Providence, and some have families in public housing. This would be a pilot program to allow 25 prisoners released from the ACI to return to their families in public housing requiring us to amend our current policy which prohibits this. The prisoners would be those**



who had exhibited contrition, have received counseling while in prison, will continue to receive counseling, referrals to transitional jobs, and other supportive services once released. They will also be tracked by the sponsoring agency. Tonight's resolution is looking for conditional approval based on the grant their grant to the Justice Department being awarded. [See the attached report.]

The Executive Director introduced Bert Cooper and Robin Frye, who attended the meeting to answer questions.

Commissioner Clarkin asked if the PHA currently has the ability to get rid of released prisoners who are boarders and lodgers in our developments. The Executive Director stated that we do when they are identified. It is, however, very difficult to prove and achieve.

Commissioner Narducci asked if individuals who had previously been thrown out of PHA developments would be allowed back in under this program. Robin Frye stated that the program would hope to avoid that situation by working closely with the PHA when selecting appropriate candidates.

Commissioner Waldman asked why methamphetamine manufacturing is the only serious drug disqualification for the program. Michelle Rocchio, Resident Selection Manager, stated that those individuals are excluded because the ingredients used to manufacture the drug are highly explosive and a danger to other

residents. Ms. Rocchio stated that if they were included she would deny them, but in more than 20 years in her job she has never received that type of application. He also asked if cocaine and heroin dealers would be allowed in the program. It was explained that they could be included provided they met the criteria for the program.

Commissioner Waters asked if the participants will be first time offenders, or repeat offenders. Ms. Frye stated that the program is geared towards reducing recidivism and may include repeat offenders. Commissioner Waters stated she thought allowing repeat offenders to participate in the program was a mistake. She also asked if these released prisoners could get lost in “the system” the way some convicts have in the past. Ms. Frye stated that this program provides more accountability and more direct involvement by a number of responsible community partners in an effort to avoid that type of a problem. The released prisoners will report regularly not just to a parole officer, but also to coaches and counselors both before and after their release, often in partnership with their families. They will each be visited face-to-face at least once per week in their homes, and their status will be reviewed by neighborhood councils at least once per month. The Executive Director added that the PHA also has its own police officers and neighborhood networks that will alert us to any problems.

Commissioner Narducci asked if similar programs had been successful in other cities, and if the board could be provided with

information or reports on those programs. Ms. Frye stated that this program is not an exact copy of the other successful programs, but is very similar. One place that it has been implemented is the Maryland Reentry Partnership in the City of Baltimore. She agreed to provide the information to the commissioners before the next meeting so they would have time to study it.

Commissioner Taylor asked about the length of the program. Burt Cooper stated that at this time it is a one year grant, but it is likely that the program could be extended to three years. Ms. Frye stated that the State of Rhode Island is already working on their own prisoner reentry program also. Commissioner Taylor wanted to know what would happen if the grant is not refunded after the first year.

Commissioner Cascella asked if the PHA would be able to evict the released prisoners immediately if there was a problem, or if we would need to go through the standard and time consuming eviction process. The Executive Director stated that the PHA General Counsel would be looking into that issue, but it seems likely that in order to provide due process, the standard eviction procedure would need to be followed. She also asked if our Public Housing Officers would be involved. The Executive Directory explained that because they are the community police in the areas of our developments, they would be the officers involved in monitoring the released prisoners involved in this program.

**After some discussion the Commissioners agreed to table the resolution pending more information from the group.**

## **RESOLUTION(S)**

### **Resolution #4174**

**Resolution authorizing the approval of several amendments to the current by-laws. [This resolution requires a vote of no less than 2/3 of the board, or 8 Commissioners. Only 7 Commissioners were present requiring the vote to be tabled until the next meeting.]**

### **Resolution #4175**

**Resolution authorizing certain changes in the PHA's Admission Policy as it relates to certain individuals released from prison. A number of the Commissioners felt that more information was needed and that the vote should be tabled until the next meeting. Commissioner Narducci moved to table the vote with Commissioner Castillo seconding the motion. A vote was taken. There was no opposition by members present.**

### **Resolution #4176**

**Resolution stating that the PHA has reviewed its Procurement Policies and Procedures and determined that it does not require a change in its current policies to comply with 24 CFR Part 85 to comply with the directive for timely expenditure of these funds. Commissioner Clarkin moved approval with Commissioner Taylor**

**seconding the motion. A vote was taken. There was no opposition by members present. Chairman Waldman declared the resolution passed.**

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**There was no old business.**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Commissioner Narducci announced that there will be a “Community Fun Day” at Chad Brown this Saturday (June 30th). The event will start with a neighborhood cleanup, then a cookout, games and raffles, and end with a Providence Police Department. VS Chad Brown youth basketball game. He invited the Commissioners to attend.**

**Commissioner Castillo announced that he is retiring from his position as a teacher at Perry Middle School, and will most likely be moving to Miami. The Executive Director asked him to send a letter of resignation, and to recommend another person who could take his place on the board.**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**There being no further business, Chairman Waldman accepted a motion from Commissioner Cascella, which was seconded by Commissioner Castillo, to adjourn the meeting at 6:05 p.m.**

**Submitted by:      Approved by:**

**Beth Herosy      Stephen J. O'Rourke**

**Recording Secretary      Executive Director**